

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 4, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Peterson:

We write to express our strong opposition to reductions in funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as part of any reconciliation between the House and Senate versions of the 2013 Farm Bill. We believe SNAP is an indispensable program for the nearly 50 million Americans that rely on it, and as the Conference Committee works towards a final version of the Farm Bill, we urge you to oppose a final conference report that would make hunger in America worse.

As you are aware, an \$11 billion cut to SNAP recently took effect after expanded funding within the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* expired on November 1, 2013. These cuts will negatively impact one in every seven Americans. For millions of struggling families, seniors, children, and disabled Americans, this reduction in funding will effectively keep food off of the table. More than 80 percent of SNAP participants already live in poverty, and it is estimated that this cut alone will force beneficiaries of the program to forego up to 21 meals every single month.

Speaker of the House John Boehner and some Members in the House of Representatives have already indicated their desire for additional cuts to SNAP. Just two months ago, H.R. 3102, the *Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013*, passed the House on a party line vote, slashing an additional \$39 billion funding from SNAP – nearly 10 times the amount agreed to in the bi-partisan compromise passed in the Senate. We believe cuts of this level would be catastrophic for the families that rely on SNAP, as well as the many at risk groups that rely on the program.

We are particularly alarmed at the impact that reductions in SNAP would have on Americans living in poverty or without a home. Homeless and impoverished Americans already struggle to make ends meet on a day to day basis, and for some, everyday life is a struggle for survival.

Every day, homeless Americans face constant instability and must cope with difficult and often unhealthy lifestyles. For those living without permanent housing, everyday life is extremely difficult. Storing and preparing food is nearly impossible, and much of the homeless population relies on temporary shelters and soup kitchens to survive. For some, panhandling or scavenging through the trash is the only way to provide food for the day. SNAP benefits provide

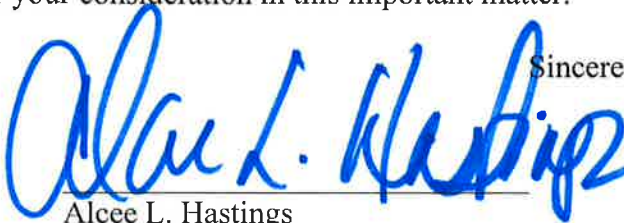
these individuals with a limited opportunity to obtain nourishment, and cutting funding for the program will only add to the difficulties these individuals face. We believe that we must do all we can to ease the burdens faced by these individuals, starting with providing basic nutritional support, to give as many of them as possible a chance to re-enter society.

Additionally, one of our nation's national priorities must be to ensure that impoverished families and individuals currently on the edge of homelessness do not end up without shelter. For many families with limited resources living close to or at the poverty level, the loss of SNAP benefits would severely increase daily hardships. For many of these families, cuts to food benefits will force them to choose between food and rent, or push them out of the SNAP program altogether. Undoubtedly, this will result in an increased number of homeless Americans.

We are aware that any compromise proposed by the conference committee will need to pass both Chambers of Congress, which will not be possible without bipartisan cooperation. This only underscores the importance of not resorting to drastic programmatic cuts to SNAP in the name of fiscal responsibility. There are most certainly other ways to cut our national deficit that do not result in 50 million empty stomachs.

Once again, we urge you to oppose reductions in SNAP funding that make hunger worse in any reconciliation between the House and Senate versions of the 2013 Farm Bill. Thank you for your consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,



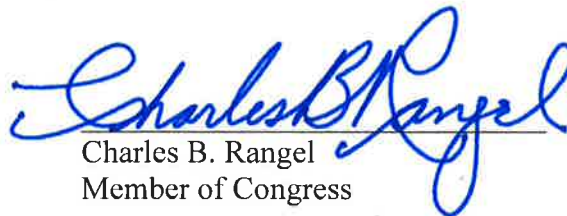
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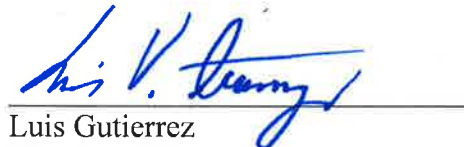
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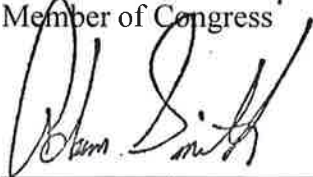
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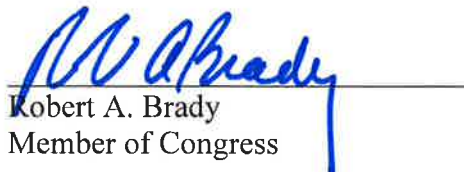
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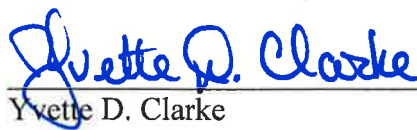
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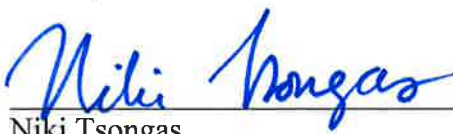

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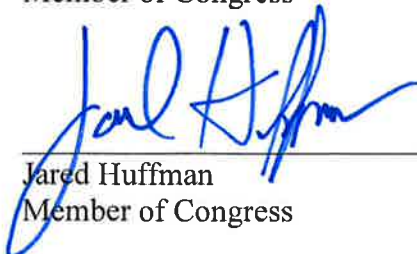

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